



Diabetes and Oral Health

Nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes and an estimated 79 million U.S. adults have pre-diabetes. Seven million Americans don't even know they have this disease! The relationship between diabetes and periodontal disease is two-way. The inflammation of periodontal disease negatively impacts blood glucose control while high blood sugar levels predispose patients to more severe periodontal infections.

Routine dental visits and good oral hygiene habits will help diabetic patients maintain good oral health. Patients with diabetes should know that the time spent caring for their mouths can improve their overall health including other chronic conditions often present with diabetes.

There is growing acceptance among medical professionals that diabetes is associated with increased occurrence and progression of periodontitis—so much so that periodontitis has been called the “sixth complication of diabetes.”

- Periodontal (gum) disease is more common in people with diabetes. Among young adults, those with diabetes have about twice the risk of periodontal disease as those without diabetes.
- Persons with poorly-controlled diabetes are nearly three times more likely to have severe periodontitis than those without diabetes.
- Almost one-third of people with diabetes have severe periodontal disease.
- Talk to your dental provider to be sure you are doing everything possible to achieve your best oral health.
- Tell your medical providers if you have been diagnosed with periodontal disease.

Remember: Periodontal disease is a transmissible, bacterial infection and can be controlled!



Tobacco and Oral Health

Most people already know that smoking is the leading preventable cause of death, disease and disability in the US. Smoking can also cause chronic disease in children exposed to second-hand smoke. Nearly nine million people suffer from serious diseases caused by tobacco while 443,000 people die every year from the effects of smoking.

But did you know...?

- Tobacco use is the **#1 contributing factor** for gum disease (periodontitis)!
- Toxins from tobacco cause oral tissues to undergo changes that lead to deeper periodontal pockets around teeth; slow the healing process after dental cleanings; and cause early tooth loss in adults.
- Tobacco is a major cause of oral, esophageal, stomach, and lung cancers. Oral cancer has only a **53% five-year survival rate** and its treatment can include disfiguring surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy treatments.
- There are numerous over-the-counter and prescription products to help you quit. Many programs are available to support your efforts.
- Ask your dentist or medical provider to help you make a plan to quit. Include family and friends in your support network.

- You can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit the American Lung Association's website at **www.lungusa.org** for information on quitting smoking.

Depending on where you live, there are also local resources to help you kick the tobacco habit:

Maine: Partnership for a Tobacco Free Maine
www.tobaccofreemaine.org/quit_tobacco/Maine_Tobacco_HelpLine.php

New Hampshire: The New Hampshire Smokers' Helpline
1-800-Try-To-STOP (800.879.8678);
Quitworks-NH - <http://quitworksnh.org/>

Vermont: Vermont Quit Network: www.vtquitnetwork.org

Your medical insurance carrier or employer may also have a program to help you quit. Create a plan that works for you.

Remember: *Good oral health is necessary for good overall health!*



Tobacco Products Can Cause More Than Just Oral Cancer

According to the American Cancer Society, tobacco smokers can develop cancers anywhere in the mouth or throat, as well as in the voice box, esophagus, lungs, kidneys, bladder, and other organs. Plus, both smoking and smokeless tobacco can cause periodontal (gum) diseases that destroy the supporting bone around teeth, which may ultimately lead to tooth loss.

Over time, smokeless tobacco use can also lead to oral cancer. According to the Oral Cancer Foundation, more than 34,000 Americans will be diagnosed with oral or pharyngeal cancer this year—and, of those newly diagnosed patients, only half of them will be alive in five years. The shocking fact is that most oral cancer is preventable.

Reduce your risk of developing oral cancer:

- Do not use tobacco products (including smokeless).
- Only consume alcohol in moderation.
- Use lip balm with sunscreen.

As with any cancer, early detection is key in halting the development of oral cancer. At each dental exam, a dentist will observe the face, lips, neck, throat, and entire mouth area for signs of oral cancer such as:

- Red or white spot on oral tissue.
- Difficulty chewing, speaking, swallowing, or moving the tongue and jaw.
- Alteration in the way teeth fit together.
- A tender sore that will not heal.
- Pain or numbness on the mouth or lips.
- Wrinkled or bumpy patch inside mouth.

Quit using tobacco today. Ask your dentist how he or she can help.

Please visit our website at www.nedelta.com and choose our Interactive Oral Health & Wellness Toolkit. Here, you will find a Delta Dental Risk Assessment Tool that examines common risk indicators and provides you with custom feedback and important information on maintaining good oral health.